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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": review of gender mainstreaming in entities of the United Nations system

Joint workplan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains the joint workplan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It provides a review of the implementation of the joint workplan for 2005 and the plan for 2006.

* E/CN.4/2006/1.
** E/CN.6/2006/1.

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I. Introduction

1. On the basis of Commission on the Status of Women resolution 39/5 of 31 March 1995 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/43 of 11 April 1997, a joint workplan is prepared annually for the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (the workplan for 2005 is contained in document E/CN.4/2005/69-E/CN.6/2005/6). In paragraph 13 of its resolution 2005/42, the Commission on Human Rights encouraged the Secretary-General to ensure implementation of the joint workplan, to continue to elaborate this plan on an annual basis, reflecting all aspects of work under way and the lessons learned, to identify obstacles/impediments and areas for further collaboration, and to submit them to the Commission on Human Rights and to the Commission on the Status of Women on a regular basis.

II. Review of the implementation of the current workplan

2. During the implementation of the current joint workplan, the exchange of information between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has continued.

3. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to exchange documents, reports and information relating to the work of the human rights treaty bodies and circulated those documents to the chairpersons and members of the treaty bodies. The Office continued to provide information for the reports prepared by the Division for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee, a regular item on the Committee's agenda.

4. During the year, the Division continued to suggest that experts on women's rights conduct the training activities of the Office with respect to reporting under international human rights instruments, and a number of other training and technical cooperation activities, expert meetings and panel discussions.

5. The Division and the Office continued coordinating their databases and websites and the Division regularly followed up with the Office on progress in updating the treaty body database. The Division facilitated the distribution of information pertaining to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, especially its concluding comments and views issued under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, through the list server maintained by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It also disseminated information about the human rights treaty system through its networks. The Division contributed to the Office's preparation of a set of harmonized symbols for treaty body documentation aimed at facilitating the location and search for documents on the Official Document System and databases.

6. Two staff members of the Division participated in a series of briefing sessions, from 9 to 13 May 2005, at the Office in Geneva, on the working methods and servicing of human rights treaty bodies and of special procedures, aimed at enhancing a harmonized approach to servicing and facilitating the treaty bodies'

functioning as a unified system. A staff member of the Division participated in an internal brainstorming session organized by the Office on the proposal concerning a standing unified treaty body and in a seminar organized by the Office on special procedures, from 10 to 13 October 2005.

7. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to cooperate with regard to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Staff members of the Division and the Office remained in contact and exchanged information regarding issues arising under and procedures in connection with the Optional Protocol.

8. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women addressed the Human Rights Committee at its eighty-third session, on 21 March 2005, and held an exchange of views on issues of common concern. The Team Leader of the Treaties and Commission Branch of the Office met with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its thirty-second session, in January 2005, on the draft reporting guidelines, as the rapporteur designated by the third inter-Committee meeting was prevented from meeting with the Committee by circumstances beyond his control. The Director of the New York office of the Office of the High Commissioner held a dialogue with the Committee on the High Commissioner's plan of action at its thirty-third session, in July 2005. The Division facilitated the participation of a member of the Committee in a panel discussion organized by the Office during the fifth session of the General Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, in January 2005.

9. The Division continued to work with the Office to revise the draft harmonized guidelines for reporting under the seven core human rights treaties, including guidelines on an expanded core document and treaty-specific reports submitted to the third inter-Committee meeting and sixteenth meeting of human rights chairpersons (HRI/MC/2004/3). It provided input into the revised guidelines (HRI/MC/2005/3), taking into account the views of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the guidelines (HRI/MC/2005/6/Add.1). The Division also provided input into the report on reservations (HRI/MC/2005/5) and the report on working methods of the treaty bodies (HRI/MC/2005/4) and other documentation prepared for the fourth inter-Committee meeting and the seventeenth meeting of human rights chairpersons, which took place from 20 to 22 June and 23 to 24 June 2005 respectively. The Chairperson and two other members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women participated in the fourth inter-Committee meeting, with the Chairperson also participating in the chairpersons' meeting. The Division participated in both meetings. The Division is facilitating follow-up to the recommendations of both meetings and a member of the Committee will participate in the technical working group to finalize the draft guidelines, which will be convened in Geneva on 8 and 9 December 2005.

10. The Division and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to cooperate in the follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1) as it pertains to human rights treaty bodies. In that regard, the Division is part of the Action 2

reference group, which is consulted by the Action 2 task force on all strategic and substantive questions and provides support to the task force in the development of new tools and guidelines.

11. The Division and the Office continued to support improved cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. The Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights at its sixty-first session addressed the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-ninth session and the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women addressed the Commission on Human Rights at its sixty-first session, as did the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. The High Commissioner for Human Rights participated in a high-level panel discussion on synergies between the national-level implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women during the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The session was devoted to a comprehensive 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The High Commissioner, the Special Adviser and a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, participated in a panel reflecting on the 10-year anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and focusing on future challenges for women's human rights, organized by the Office of the High Commissioner and the Office of the Special Adviser in parallel with the sixty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights.

12. Coordination of the preparation of reports to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies continued. When requested, the Division for the Advancement of Women contributed to reports prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner and provided information for special procedures. The Office contributed to reports prepared by the Division.

13. The Office of the High Commissioner, as a member of the task force established by the Division in support of the preparation of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on violence against women, regularly participated in task force meetings via teleconference and contributed to the dissemination of information about the study. Staff of the Office participated in two expert group meetings convened by the Division in preparation for the study (10 to 14 April 2005 and 17 to 21 May 2005) and in the consultation convened on 6 and 7 September 2005 at United Nations Headquarters. The Office facilitated the continuous interaction between the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences and the Division for the Advancement of Women.

14. The Division organized a judicial colloquium on the use of international human rights law, from 25 to 27 May 2005, and a training workshop on implementation of and reporting under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women from 30 May to 1 June 2005 in Santiago with the participation of an expert of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Regional Representative of the Office of the High Commissioner in Chile addressed the opening meeting and a staff member of the Office participated in the events. A staff member of the Division participated in a workshop convened by the Office on the follow-up to concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, held from 28 to 30 November 2005 in Buenos Aires.

15. A staff member of the Office participated in a workshop organized by the Division to review the approach and preliminary drafts of a manual on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, held in Utrecht, the Netherlands, from 12 to 14 May 2005. The preparation of the manual is part of the joint workplan of the Division and the Office (see E/CN.6/2003/5, para. 13).

16. The Office and the Division jointly planned a workshop on follow-up to the concluding comments and observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, with the participation of experts from both committees, to be hosted by the Government of Egypt in December 2005.

17. The Division for the Advancement of Women collaborated with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the regional office for Latin America of the Office of the High Commissioner in the publication of a compilation of the concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the countries of the region.

18. The Division and the Office continued to cooperate within the framework of inter-agency mechanisms, especially the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality under the leadership of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. Both participated actively in the activities of several of the Network's task forces, including those on women, peace and security; gender equality and the Millennium Development Goals; gender and trade; and indigenous women. They also participated in initiatives of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee task force on gender and humanitarian assistance. The Division provided women's human rights publications, which the Office distributed, together with its own publications, at the launch of the Geneva-based inter-agency initiative on "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" and at film and discussion sessions organized at the Office within the same context in December 2005.

III. Joint workplan for 2006

19. Cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue in 2006 to increase attention to the human rights of women and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in all human rights activities in the following major areas: support for human rights treaty bodies; support for intergovernmental bodies and special procedures; technical cooperation, advisory services and meetings; awareness-raising and outreach; and inter-agency cooperation. The major activities planned in those areas are outlined below.

A. Support for human rights treaty bodies

20. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue the practice of past years of coordination, cooperation and information exchange between treaty bodies. Activities will include the exchange of documents, reports and the results of the work of the treaty bodies and the circulation of those documents to the chairpersons and members of the

treaty bodies; follow-up to the recommendations of the seventeenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies and the points of agreement of the fourth inter-Committee meeting (including support to experts designated to participate in working groups on the harmonized reporting guidelines and reservations); and updating of the synthesized report on the working methods of all treaty bodies.

21. The Division for the Advancement of Women will contribute to the preparations for and conduct of the eighteenth meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies and the fifth inter-committee meeting and to any ad hoc meetings in relation to the work of the treaty bodies that may be convened during 2006. The Division, the Chairperson and designated members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women will participate in those meetings. The High Commissioner for Human Rights will meet with the Committee, at its invitation, at its thirty-fourth session (to be held in January 2006) to discuss aspects of the plan of action pertaining to the human rights treaty bodies. The Division will contribute to the ongoing consultation process on treaty body reform with a view to strengthening the implementation of the treaties at the national level.

22. Exchange of information and collaboration will continue among staff of the Office and the Division and designated Committee members with regard to communications and inquiry procedures.

B. Support for intergovernmental bodies and special procedures

23. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will continue the established practice of cooperation in areas including support for the participation of the Chairpersons of the Commission on the Status of Women and of the Commission on Human Rights in each other's sessions and the participation of the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in their sessions. The Division and the Office will support the convening of a possible joint meeting of the bureaux of the Commissions via videoconference. Senior officials of the Division and the Office are again expected to address the Commissions, including at any panel discussion that may be organized in conjunction with their sessions.

24. Cooperation will be enhanced in the preparation of reports on similar issues to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies, such as those relating to trafficking in women and girls and to violence against women. The Office will continue to contribute to the in-depth study on all forms of violence against women that is being prepared by the Division in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/185 of 22 December 2003, including participation in the task force set up by the Division on the study. In particular, the Division and the Office, together with the secretariat for the study on violence against children, will jointly organize, in the second quarter of 2006, a workshop for members of human rights treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders pertaining to their consideration of violence against women and violence against children, respectively, to provide input to both studies.

25. The Division and the Office will continue to seek input and provide comments for other reports, as requested. The Division will continue to provide targeted input for the work of special procedures.

C. Technical cooperation, advisory services and meetings

26. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will improve early information exchange and coordination on technical cooperation activities and cooperate whenever possible in such activities, especially with respect to training activities on reporting under international human rights instruments and the follow-up to concluding comments and observations, and cooperate in preparing and piloting training packages on international human rights instruments. Staff of the Office and the Division will be invited to contribute to and participate in relevant workshops as appropriate.

27. The Division for the Advancement of Women will contribute to the implementation of the plan of action entitled "Strengthening human rights-related United Nations action at the country level: national human rights promotion and protection systems", developed by the Office of the High Commissioner in cooperation with the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs, pursuant to Action 2 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/387 and Corr.1).

28. The Office of the High Commissioner will invite a staff member from the Division to participate in relevant meetings of the field representatives of the Office.

D. Awareness-raising and outreach

29. The Division and the Office will continue to ensure that the electronic database covering the seven treaty bodies is up to date, fully operational and accessible to both. The websites of the Division and the Office will also be systematically updated and improved to enhance information about human rights in general and women's human rights in particular. The Division will continue to monitor progress with respect to integrating gender perspectives in the work of intergovernmental and expert bodies.

E. Inter-agency coordination

30. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women, under the leadership of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, will continue to cooperate within the framework of inter-agency mechanisms. These activities will relate to, inter alia, the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Millennium Development Goals, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the follow-up to the 10-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.